

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Women's History Month uniform exhibit instills pride

By Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann
SDNG Public Affairs Office

SPEARFISH, S.D. – A Women's History Month military uniform exhibit was displayed at the Black Hills State University Yellow Jacket Student Union March 2-4 to celebrate the contributions of women in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The traveling display features time-period uniforms from women serving in various military branches. The free exhibit provided visitors with descriptions of the garments and the women who wore them.

"The uniform exhibit is a great way to recognize and honor the history of women who have served and are currently serving in our military," said exhibit coordinator 1st Lt. Carstin Jerzak, South Dakota National Guard equal employment manager. "Additionally, it's a great way for those who may be interested in serving in the National Guard to learn about the career opportunities and benefits of being associated with a professional, dependable, high-skilled and elite organization that represents the best of South Dakota and the nation."

The South Dakota National Guard partnered with the SDNG Museum and the Reserve Officer Training Corps and Veterans Services offices of Black Hills State University, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University to host the exhibit at the college campuses.

One of the uniforms belongs to South Dakota Army National Guard's State Chief Warrant Officer 5 Darla Crown, who will retire this spring after serving in the military for 42 years.

"I hope young people see the uniforms and are inspired," said Crown. "These uniforms represent the women who came before and after me."

Crown has experienced firsthand the changes women have faced in the military since her first day in 1973 in what was called the Women's Army Corps. According to Crown, women in the past were limited to very few duty positions compared to the new combat roles in which women are now serving.

"Now, women are able to pursue any position they aspire to fill," said Crown, who currently holds the highest ranking chief warrant officer position in the SDARNG. "There are so many opportunities today for women in the military. There is no gender barrier; nowadays, it's not about what you're allowed to do... it's about what do you want to do."

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Black Hills State University freshman Kourtney Christopherson spent time reading the biographies from the women who wore the uniform.

“I first took a photo of the Army uniform and sent it to my friend, who recently decided to join the South Dakota Army National Guard,” said Christopherson. “I texted her saying ‘this is going to be you in a few months’ and she replied with ‘I know, I can’t wait!’”

Christopherson looked at the rest of the uniforms and found a personal connection with the exhibit when she saw her last name on one of the nameplates.

She made a phone call to her family and discovered the Air National Guard dress uniform was worn by her second cousin.

“It is really cool that I am related to someone who wore one of these uniforms,” said Christopherson. “I think this [exhibit] is awesome! It really brings the history of women in the military to us and helps give them the recognition they deserve.”

Chief Master Sgt. Jenn Reecy, a member of the S.D. Air National Guard for nearly 22 years, lent her Airman Battle Uniform for the display.

“I couldn’t think of a better way to tell the story of women serving in the National Guard than through this incredible display of heritage,” said Reecy. “I have immense pride in serving and consider wearing the uniform as an opportunity to influence others to serve and grow the leadership capacity of our communities, state and nation.”

Reecy believes visibly celebrating the role women have had, and continue to have, in the military builds upon the legacy of women serving our country.

“Woven through the fabric of the uniform is the story, the legacy, the journey of being an Airman,” said Reecy.

The exhibit will be on display throughout the month of March on the following dates and locations:

March 8-13, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Rapid City – Camp Rapid, Joint Force Headquarters, Bldg. 420
March 16-20, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m., Vermillion – University of South Dakota – Muenster University Center
March 23-27, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Brookings – South Dakota State University – Student Union
March 30-April 3, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Pierre – SDNG Museum

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High resolution photos are available upon request or at www.flickr.com/photo/southdakotationalguard



150304-Z-CW157-002: Black Hills State University freshman Kourtney Christopherson takes a photo of a South Dakota Army National Guard uniform from the Women’s History Month military uniform exhibit displayed at the Black Hills State University Yellow Jacket Student Union to celebrate the contributions of women in the U.S. Armed Forces, March 3, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150304-Z-CW157-004: A Women’s History Month military uniform exhibit at the Black Hills State University Yellow Jacket Student Union to celebrate the contributions of women in the U.S. Armed Forces, March 3, 2015. The traveling display features time-period uniforms from women serving in various military branches. Visitors to the free exhibit viewed descriptions of the garments and the women who wore them. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann /Released)



150304-Z-CW157-007: South Dakota Army National Guard's Chief Warrant Officer 5 Darla Crown talks with Ray Evans, a former veteran who retired from the Navy and works at Black Hills State University, about the Women's History Month military uniform exhibit which was displayed at the Black Hills State University Yellow Jacket Student Union to celebrate the contributions of women in the U.S. Armed Forces, March 3, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150304-Z-CW157-006: A Women's History Month military uniform exhibit displayed at the Black Hills State University Yellow Jacket Student Union to celebrate the contributions of women in the U.S. Armed Forces, March 3, 2015. The traveling display features time-period uniforms from women serving in various military branches. Visitors to the free exhibit viewed descriptions of the garments and the women who wore them. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)

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